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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

EVALUATION AS EMPTY COMMENT

by

VERNA V. BROPHY

(C)

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

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Date July 12, 1984

Abstract

The language of educational evaluation, and especially of teacher evaluation is an instrumental language consistent with the production and performance metaphor on which most evaluation is grounded. Research has been focused primarily on the objects of, techniques for, models of, attitudes toward and difficulties in doing evaluation. Research on the experience of being evaluated is noticeably missing.

The question which provided the direction for this study asks what the experience of evaluation is like for teachers. The reflections and insights of five teachers were the source material for the study.

A phenomenological approach was used in attempting to disclose the sense which teachers made of their experiences. Five themes emerged. They include the understanding that evaluation is a nagging thorn, a demand for a performance, a demand for technique without context, an empty comment and a plea for understanding.

These themes, in turn, point to the notion that evaluation encourages teachers to *do* and not *be*, that evaluation comments are empty of reference to what teachers understand the true meaning of 'to teach' to be. Based on the reflections of the teachers who participated in this study, teacher evaluation asks for an inauthentic being.

Acknowledgments

This thesis is dedicated to my son, Jason, and to all the children whom I have taught over the years. Their presence has been a continual source of inspiration for me. When I have been discouraged about the trends in education, it has always been the children who have inspired me to renew my commitment to teaching. They have taught me so many lessons about what it really means to be a teacher.

I would like to thank Dennis for his unfailing belief in me and my mother for her interest and long hours of typing.

I also wish to thank all those teachers who made time to talk with me about their experiences of evaluation. I am especially grateful to the five teachers who were the source of my study. Without their reflections and insights, this study would not have been done.

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I. Chapter One

A. Introduction

A phenomenological question comes to us, not as an operationally defined hypothesis, clear, distinct and removed from our own being but rather like a kind of rolling fog. It comes out of a persistant kind of wondering--a wondering that hooks itself on a single stark statement like that of a teacher who says, "Evaluation--it's a neccesary evil." It surfaces, not purposively, but in a vague sense when you comment on your son's hockey efforts and you notice subtle changes in his face, how he holds his body or the tentative way in which he steps on the ice the next game. The wondering heightens at the very moment when you are steeped in developing a teacher evaluation policy and a colleague asks, "Did it ever occur to you that by implementing this policy we may well lose the very thing that we are trying to save?"

A phenomenological question arises out of the totality of our experiences--out of reading Marcel (1950) who says that the further we pass beyond the limits of a purely technical activity the less we can make reference to the "no matter what" or the "anybody at all", or on reading Capra's (1976:71) statement that quantum theory "thus reveals the basic oneness of the universe. It shows that we cannot compose the world into independently existing smaller units." On reading these kinds of statements one wonders that if we hold that any teacher at all ought to perform certain instrumental tasks, as we often do when evaluating teachers, we are, in fact, moving away from the true meaning of teaching.

The wondering continues when reading Holt (1981) who claims that evaluation is an activity about which many advisors are uneasy, or that of Tyler (1981) who contends that reducing the disharmony between our experience and our conceptualizations of it is critical if evaluation is to serve us well. And, finally, it is often through a particular experience like reading Kemmis (1979) who writes that our analytic dismantlings of the phenomena of education may well do violence to our notion of education, the wondering presents itself as a question.

B. Purpose of the Study

To ask phenomenologically, what is a teacher's experience of evaluation is not really to ask one, clearly articulated question but to let the question stand forth from the experience itself. For example, when I read the following account of the inspector's visit in Braithwaite's (1965) novel, Why Shoot the Teacher, many questions present themselves.

> One of the first things I'd asked McDougall was when I could expect the inspector...I wished he hadn't told me about seeing the car come meandering. From my position at the front of the class I had a perfect view of that road, and from the beginning of April on, I never really took my eyes off it.
>
> Besides I kept a good sample lesson for each grade tucked away in a desk drawer, ready to be produced on the fatal day. And I had lesson plans ready and the register up to date and an elaborate time-table tacked to the wall...
>
> Then, one morning...the inspector came. I had got myself lost in the sideroads of a Grade Ten algebra question and neither Allan nor myself could find our way. The Grade One children were messing around with plastercine...Grade Five were making a four foot long map of Canada with flour and water and sand and sticks and other messy stuff.

This description of an experience, as lived, raises several questions. What, in the knowing that the inspector was coming, forced the teacher's awareness constantly on the road? What understanding about what it means to teach underlies the tucking away of sample lessons or having a register up to date? What kinds of activities should students be doing when the inspector comes? What is it really like to stand face to face with the one who is to evaluate you?

The concern of my study is to ask to what does the teachers' talk of evaluation point? What are the essential structures of the experience? What meanings do teachers give to their experience? What is it that a teacher really means when she says, "First they come and sit down at the back of the room and take notes and watch and then they expect me to go back into my classroom and **be** (teacher's emphasis) with my students?" What in the experience of evaluation makes it possible for academics and practioners alike to talk of a sense of unease?

I ask what is the experience of evaluation for teachers and in doing so what I really mean is that my purpose is to come to a deeper understanding of how evaluation is experienced by teachers.

C. Significance of the Study

Evaluation in education is not a new phenomenon. The Index to Dissertation Abstracts, dating from the mid 1800's contains in excess of one hundred pages and over eight thousand entries under the subject headings of educational evaluation or supervision. The literature is replete with new and different techniques for evaluation. Despite the differences in procedures, the essential focus remains the same. The literature appears to center around the techniques for, models of, the value of, attitudes toward, or the difficulties in doing evaluation. Just what constitutes the experience of evaluation is noticeably missing.

The underlying assumption upon which evaluation is grounded is that evaluation can and will lead to improved quality. The preambles to Alberta Education's (1983) proposed evaluation policy, in general, and in particular teacher evaluation make reference to this belief.

> Students, teachers, schools and school systems, and programs will be evaluated to enable provincial and local school authorities to monitor the quality of education throughout the province.
>
> The practice of teaching will be evaluated in order to attain and maintain quality instruction to students throughout the province...

While the belief that there is a direct and positive relationship between evaluation and improved quality persists, there is at least tacit recognition evident in the literature that, in fact, we do not have a deep understanding of teachers' experience of evaluation and thus of its impact on the pedagogic relationship. House (1979) who has dedicated considerable time to the issue of evaluation argues that evaluation won't succeed unless we understand clearly that with which we are working and that if we are going to develop a theory of evaluation we had better know what's really going on.

The theoretical understanding that the quality of something can be improved if proper evaluation techniques are used is called into question when one reads excerpts from, "A Nation at Risk" (1983). One wonders how a nation which has been the spawning ground for much of the research and practice of educational evaluation, can still be described as being a "nation at risk" due to the quality of its educational enterprise. What is it about the process of evaluation which results in a discrepancy between the theory that evaluation will improve the quality of education and the reality that, despite a decade of both intensive and extensive evaluation, education can still be described as being in a

crisis?

Despite all the new and improved techniques, evaluation in education remains problematic. One way of approaching a problem is to persist in what we are doing, to do fundamentally the same things, but to try harder, do it more and do it better. An alternative might be to determine what really is happening in the experience and then make decisions regarding subsequent action.

With respect to evaluation in education, we have a history of pursuing the first path; a study which attempts to uncover the experience as lived could provide a basis for new understandings and insights into the process of evaluation.

II. Chapter Two

A. Evaluation: An Overview

Metaphors are often used in educational literature to reveal essential understandings without having to delineate these premises on each occasion. The purpose of this chapter is to identify the metaphors on which much of educational evaluation is predicated, to reveal the problematic nature of these metaphors, both from a practical and a philosophic viewpoint and, finally, to briefly review alternative metaphors and evaluation theory which have not had a strong influence on current practice. In this way, both the findings and the implications of the study will be put into perspective.

B. Metaphor as a Way of Understanding Evaluation Theory

According to Smith, (1981) the methodology of evaluation depends on four components. These components include:

1. A point of view or conceptual, value, social and philosophical element which defines the purpose and meaning of the activity.
2. A paradigm or constellation of elements which constitute a belief system and which is turn determines the orientation or epistemological approach to the activity.
3. An operational strategy, consistent with both point or view and paradigm, which specifies a general sequence of activities designed to achieve some end.
4. A technique or discrete procedure which results in outcomes of prespecified form.

The use of metaphor facilitates understanding without having to resort to delineating a complex and comprehensive list of characteristics. Metaphor provides, in this sense, economy of effort.

Ortony (1975) argues that metaphors are not just convenient poetic devices but rather are necessary to come to an understanding of a complexity. Through the transfer of meaning from the "vehicle" (term being used) metaphorically to the "topic" comes a comparative understanding without the message having to be explicitly spelled out.

Haynes (1975:274) in arguing against Ortony's view of the necessity of metaphors says that "there are some cases in which it is more illuminating to say that the metaphor creates the similarity than to say that it formulates some similarity previously existing."

Miller supports this view of Haynes, by insisting that:

> In educational writing metaphors are typically used to gloss over matters which cannot be well explained or clearly specified. I shall also argue that metaphors are often used in a misleading way to play upon the emotions or to carry an argument by means of distortion and overemphasis.(1976:174)

and that:

> There are many occasions when educational writers seem to capitalize upon these disadvantages; they have recourse to metaphor because they do not want to be committed to specifics.

Metaphors are persuasive precisely because of the apparent simplicity of comparison. They sum up many details; they are packed full of meaning. "Because effective metaphors are striking and memorable, because they have at least the impact of a good slogan, if not the allure of high art, they are valuable as cues to memory by providing vivid summaries of what we would not so readily recall if listed in unadorned details"(Miller, 1976:181). The fact that metaphors help us to recall details does not necessarily mean that the details they help us recall are, in fact, a truthful reflection of the experience in the first place. This, for Miller, and others is especially true of the production metaphor evidenced in educational writing.

Harlen (1980) says that it is through the break down of the evaluation metaphor that we can see what is of value to the evaluator. Evaluators will eventually emphasize some aspect of the metaphor, since all evaluation involves decisions. The evaluator decides to report on one aspect and not another; to question this and not that; to see these events and not those. "We chose to find out about certain things both because we feel they are significant and because what leads us to consider them significant will be the basis on which we make judgments" (Harlen, 1980:55).

Holt (1981) also refers to the understanding that the process of evaluation reflects the evaluator's perspective; that value judgments regarding selection and weight to be given that selection must be made and must influence one's interpretation of the experience. "One who subscribes to any one of them [metaphors] does so because he holds a certain view of the world in terms of what is real and what is worthy of consideration as we live" (Gertenbach, 1973:93).

C. Current Metaphors

The theories and models of evaluation on which much of the writing and research pertaining to teacher evaluation is grounded appear to be centered on two metaphors. These metaphors include the production metaphor, with its emphasis on products or results, and the performance metaphor which focuses on the process or behaviours involved in an activity. The distinction as to which metaphor provides the basis of an evaluation model is not always sharp, and sometimes a model may reflect more than one metaphor.

the metaphor of production-engineering

Early evaluation practices were based primarily on the production-engineering metaphor. Through the use of this metaphor education is understood as having characteristics similar to that of a factory, and thus, the way to address educational issues is through the structures of industry, through fixing outcomes, by controlling processing and inputs. The engineering aspect of the production metaphor is predicated on the belief that the rational, scientific, reliable and calculated techniques used to increase production in the factory could be applied to education as a way to engineer increased efficiency and effectiveness.

So closely is the industrial metaphor adhered to, that early educational evaluation models like those of (Lessinger, 1971) (Glass, 1972) (Stufflebeam, 1973) (Scriven, 1974) (Popham, 1975) seldom refer to teachers and teaching or students and learning. Teachers, sometimes called "personnel", are lumped together with the other "resources" such as equipment, space and other cost items. Students are the raw material which requires processing in order to meet market demands. Teachers, and to some extent, students are considered to be "inputs". But these "inputs" are not of primary concern since the important element in the production model is the product. Optimizing returns on investments is the goal. Success is measured by translating personal accomplishment into cash value. Whatever input or process which leads to the product meeting minimum standards is deemed acceptable and results are ascertained using some standardized measurement instrument. The worth of an activity, viewed from the perspective of the production metaphor, is appraised in terms of what it accomplishes. Stufflebeam

(1974:119) cites Ralph Tyler as having said, in 1942, that "evaluation is the process of determing whether objectives have been achieved." This ends-means, or goal aspect of evaluation continues to be pervasive.

the metaphor of performance

Several models of evaluation such as those of (Provus, 1971) (Scriven, 1974) (Jackson, 1974) (Stake, 1975) (Parlett and Hamilton, 1977) (Eisner, 1977) (Guba, 1982) center on the educational process rather than on the product. While several diverse models for evaluation have been articulated in the past decade, only those models which advanced the notion that teaching is akin to performing seem to have had an important impact on teacher evaluation.

The metaphor of educating as performing persists throughout the literature on teacher evaluation. The argument of the Performance Based Teacher Education (PBTE) movement is essentially that in order to perform skills, the skills must first be particularized and then practiced. "Teaching strategies were analyzed into relatively discrete teaching skills" (Perlberg, 1981:69), which teachers practiced, often in a laboratory or at training sessions until they could perform them competently.

Oldham (1974:54) maintains that evaluation will ensure a high quality of teacher performance. Bergen (1980) also holds the view that teacher performance can be improved through a comprehensive program of teacher evaluation and development. The need for "specific observational data about teaching behaviours" and the analysis of teaching behavior as a way of improving techniques is advocated by Pfeiffer and Dunlop (1982). Medley, Soar and Coker claim that there are four steps in doing an objective teacher performance evaluation. These steps include:

1. Setting, defining or agreeing upon a *task* to be performed.
2. Making a documentary, quantifiable *record* of the behaviour of the teacher who is performing the task.
3. Quantifying the record, that is, deriving a *score* or set of scores from it; and
4. Comparing the score with a predetermined *standard*.(1983:22)

They go on to say that it is not necessary to be an expert in order to observe a teacher's behaviour, that anyone at all, using a checklist of behaviours, can "become very specific

and precise in defining what aspects of teacher performance are relevant." (1983:23)

The view that we can, and indeed ought to stand removed from our actions is alluded to frequently in the literature. Some researchers contend that a clear distinction should be made between the office and the person, and that evaluation should focus on the process and the task dimensions of the role. Medley, Soar and Coker (1983) imply that the evaluation of teacher performance does not necessitate the evaluation of the teacher's characteristics and insist that consideration of the teacher's personal qualities renders the judgment suspect.

The notion that teaching can be separated from the teacher, that teaching is a technical activity, that good teaching occurs when particular, discrete, concretely identifiable behaviours are practiced is the underlying premise of much of what is written regarding the evaluation of teachers.

Blumberg refers to the concern which teachers express regarding the notion that teaching is a performance. Teachers see the supervisory process as being characterized by "artificiality, unimaginativeness and closedness" (1980:32). They express concern over the separation of behaviour tasks from social and emotional behaviour and hold that the work in which supervisor and teacher engage tends to deal with isolated fragments of the problem and not the whole problem. The teachers see themselves being treated as people who have something wrong with them, as disconnected bodies.

D. The Problematic Nature of the Metaphors

The volume of literature advocating various models, theories and techniques for educational evaluation is matched by those who refer to its potential failings and dangers.

In looking back on fifteen years of educational evaluation, Wolf (1983) reaches several conclusions. He maintains that, while evaluators think of themselves as being humanistic, their methodology and underlying assumptions do not match this belief, and that, "far too much money and time has been spent on the technical aspects of evaluation and that the human side of evaluation has received little attention." He attributes the essential failure of the evaluation endeavour to improve quality to this stance.

Guba describes evaluation as having failed to produce the expected results. He remarks that:

> The signs of evaluation's failure are compelling. Any professional area that is so much avoided; that produces so many anxieties; that immobilizes the very people who want to avail themselves of it, that is incapable of operational definition, even by its most trained advocates; which is not effective in answering reasonable and important questions...must give us pause.(1973:3)

Holt (1981) postulates that evaluation, while it may increase understanding does not necessarily result in a person's doing or saying anything about that understanding. In Holt's words:

> While extrinsic evaluation of what he has done will enhance his understanding of his own abilities, it is important to recognize that such knowledge cannot by itself lead to improvement: that can only come from successful doing.(1981:14)

And Kemmis, as quoted in Holt, asks:

> Will our analytic dismantlings of the phenomena of education enable us to put together a better, more coherent package, a more wothwhile educational experience or build a better society? Or does the analysis do violence to our notion of education? (1981:32)

practical problems

Much of the research on the identification of effective teaching substantiates the general disclaimers regarding the value of evaluation as a means of improving quality. Martin (1979) summarizes some of the research on the effect of teaching behaviours on student achievement. Quoting the results of several studies, he states that:

> Morsh and Wilder, after reviewing research on teaching effectiveness published between 1900 and 1952, concluded that: "no single, specific, observable teacher act has yet been found whose frequency or percent of occurrence is invariably (and) significantly correlated with student achievement.
>
> Wallen and Travers concluded that teaching methods do not seem to make a difference; nor is there any substantial evidence to favor one method over another.
>
> Lembo reported that studies on lecture versus discussion, and group-centered versus teacher-centered approaches revealed no significant differences in student achievement.
>
> Shavelson and Dempsey noted, for example, that the research has not identified consistent, replicable features of teaching that lead directly---or even indirectly---to valued student outcomes.
>
> Reviewers have concluded, with remarkable regularity, that few consistent relationships between teacher variables and effectiveness criteria can be established.

Martin describes the research in which it is reported that teacher "practice" does not result in an increase in student learning. Even when the teacher practised or rehearsed

the performance, with the benefit of considerable feedback, the effect on student achievement was minimal. He also refers to research which suggests that when teachers are rated highly:

> in genuiness, respect and empathy (Aspy)
>
> on teacher-pupil relationships (Lewis, Lovell and Jesse)
>
> in positive feelings towards pupils (Davidson and Lang)
>
> in warmth and considerateness (Cogan)
>
> in warmth and student orientedness (St. John, Good et. al., Lembo)
>
> in acceptance of feeling responses (Amidon and Giammatteo)

student achievement shows improvement. Martin concludes that the pursuit of the notion that improvement in the performance of particular teacher skills or techniques will result in improved learning is "futile", "neither valid nor realistic" and that dealing with teacher performance to the exclusion of dealing with feelings, "flies in the face of much of the research reported and is supported by none."

Martin's findings are confirmed by those of Soar who, after reviewing literature on the relationship between performance of particular behaviours as determined by rating scales and student achievement, concludes that:

> There is growing evidence that the ubiquitous five-point rating scale, at least as it is commonly used in classroom settings, is likely to seriously mislead us.

and that:

> If competency lists are taken as representing the conventional wisdom of the field, then there appears to be serious question about the soundness of using that conventional wisdom as a basis for rating scales identifying quality in classrooms.(1983:19)

Zahorik,too, states that:

> Research has not, as least up to this time, identified effective ways of teaching on which evaluation of teaching can be based... both teaching and evaluation of teaching would be simple if we had a verified set of behaviours. The truth is we do not.(1980:48-49)

Murnane put the issue this way.

> Teaching is simply not a process that consists of application of codified techniques and principles that can be developed in the laboratory or learned in the university classroom.(1983:568)

Geons looks to industry in his attempt to demonstrate the failings of the current evaluation models. After reviewing literature from business and industry, he argues that American productivity, despite the proliferation of evaluation schemes, has not increased

at the same rate as other nations. He also gives evidence that managers in industry have been equally resistant to "bottom-line" evaluation as have some educators. Quoting private sector literature, he makes that point that:

> The conventional evaluation approach constitutes something dangerously close to violation of the integrity of the personality. Managers are uncomfortable when they are in the position of "playing God." The respect we hold for the inherent value of the individual leaves us distressed when we must take responsibility for judging the personal worth of a fellow man. Yet the conventional approach to performance appraisal forces us not only to make judgments and see them acted upon, but also to communicate them to those we have judged. Small wonder we resist.(1982:419)

In the same article, Geons (1982:421) describes a General Electric Company investigation into its performance appraisal system as having concluded that "an annual appraisal by a manager of a worker's performance was of questionable value and did not motivate employees to higher degrees of productivity," and that "frequent criticism is a strong threat to self-esteem and results in lower productivity."

Acceptance of the performance metaphor as a basis for seeking answers to competency issues is challenged by Klein (1983) in his study which examined the methods of training air force pilots. The current procedures for developing training programs "attempts to break a complex task down into a set of discrete steps. These steps may be performed either in a fixed sequence or according to specific, predefined contingencies"(1983:5). Klein explains that the approach is "excellent for training procedural tasks" but has serious limitations with regard to the teaching of complex motor and perceptual-cognitive tasks. In other words, the approach is most useful in training pilots to start jet engines, or operate a radar scope and has obvious deficiencies when it comes to training pilots in the dynamics of fighter / target maneuverings. Citing a study by Knoop and Welde (1973), Klein (1983:6) concludes that "experienced pilots could not agree on how specific actions are combined to yield *acceptable* performance of basic aerial maneuvers." He refers to the danger of distorting complex tasks by attempting to define them as discrete steps. Klein questions the usefulness of an instrumental approach in the training of attitude and judgment. "Such emotional behaviors do not readily fit into a cue / reaction framework"(1983:6).

Having reviewed the literature on the training and performance evaluation of fighter pilots, Klein affirms that molecular task descriptions are useful for maintaining minimum standards but do not ensure proficiency.

Klein, then, outlines the phenomenological approach he took in an attempt to answer the question of, "How can we depict the smooth and coordinated performance of the highly skilled and proficient pilot?" His study revealed that proficient pilots understand the task wholistically and when tasks are segmented the emotional components "drop out". Repeated, discrete, particularized instruction shows no improvement in proficiency. In fact, any "human capability beyond a step-by-step level of functioning is lost". To be proficient, you must forget your concern for "everything they told you" and "not missing a step". Proficient pilots are self-forgetful.

philosophic problems

Miller (1976) points out that the factory metaphor is persuasive because it proceeds from simple points of comparison. Factories and schools both have inputs and outputs, both places process, students move from skill to skill, concept to concept, subject to subject and products go along the assembly line. Educators, he maintains, have been only too willing to borrow terminology from business and industry, thus, while that has resulted in the metaphor persisting, such comparisons have involved "exaggeration and distortion".

For Apple (1974) the current views about testing and evaluation take for granted the idea that these pratices will lead to more human environments; however, there is little concrete evidence to support that belief. The production mentality has resulted in students being "processed into particular shapes and dropped into slots roughly congruent with the status of their parents."

Evaluation, for Apple, is a process of "social valuing" and he points out that such valuing involves a choice. We could, for example, value educational activity for its human qualities, (for the extent to which it supports all participants to reach their highest potential as human beings) or for its embodiment of ambiquity and uncertainty (for the extent to which it encourages individuality and uniqueness) or for its efficiency (for the extent to which we reach prespecified goals cheaply). The third alternative appears to be valued by educational evaluation theorists and policy makers to the exclusion of the other two possibilities.

The literature implies a propensity to rationalize all aspects of intersubjective behavior and to consider only instrumental effectiveness when looking at human action. Apple remarks "that the necessity of certain factors that are embodied in the human condition, factors such as awe, mystery, uncertainty and ambiguity, conflict and the dialectic of stability and change", are all irrelevant in industrial logic. Since schools are, above all else, about people, these human conditions must be valued, particularly if we are to prevent the possibility, using the industrial model, of seeing people as things. Apple (1974:10) states that, "Evaluation as it is currently practiced can give only a decidedly partial perspective on the worth of educational events."

He sees the dangers of unquestioning acceptance of the production metaphor as including the false sense of security it creates among the public, the fostering of a myopic perspective among professionals, the entrenchment of an acceptance of the manipulation of human beings as "things", and the perpetuation of the stereotyping of large groups of people through the resultant labelling of students.

Misgeld (1983) describes the depersonalization of social relations. His contention is that technologies are not only used as a way to describe the relationship between things and their properties, but also, the relationship between people. Administrative procedures which Misgeld (1983:201) calls "social technologies" attempt to externalize human action and interaction so that it can become "analyzable with reference to standard conceptions of motive interest, and skill, as well as to standardized conceptions of achievement". The consequence of the application of such social technologies is the increased ability to monitor, and thereby control human endeavour. According to Misgeld (1984:204) the application of social technologies to education, will result in education being understood as "instruction needed for selective processes of experience and action to be organized in such a way that their selectivity can be understood, managed and readjusted".

Price (1974) examines the performance metaphor of teaching and delineates the assumptions which this metaphor implies with respect to teaching competency. He argues that pursuit of performance based training or supervision will end in failure simply because it is predicated on a philosophically unsound base. In doing so he shows how teaching is not characteristic of any connotation of performance. Price claims that

> Teaching cannot be described, correctly, as the performance of a thing; and if it were, that description could have no point. It cannot be described, correctly, as a mechanical performance like the performance of the drill; and if it were, it would carry with it the false point of causing expectation that everyone who has been taught a subject will certainly be able to use his mastery of it in the realization of any human purpose to which mastery is appropriate. It cannot be described, correctly,as an artistic performance like the performance of the sonata; and if it were, the description could accomplish nothing other than itself in ordinary circumstances. It cannot be described, correctly, as a moral performance like that of Jones' writing letters to his parents; and again, if it were, the description could accomplish nothing other than itself.(1974:326)

Rice (1975) also warns about the dangers of viewing teaching from a performance metaphor. Rationalistic, technological approaches are limited for understanding human interaction; they encourage "theoretical constructs but not existential persons". As Rice puts it, when understanding is separate from experience, feeling and practice and :

> When we reach the point when our feeling content is gone from our constructions of the world, that point where we stop thinking of our descriptions of the world as pointing us back to our presentness to it, and begin believing that our representations of the world are "the way it really is without our presence," we have passed the point of lucidity. We then have passed the point of reasonableness and are dwelling only in reason, not in faithfulness to the being-in-the world which is human being. We have committed a violence.(1975:94-95)

Stoop (1973) and Levit (1973) protest the reified view of teaching which is promoted by the production and performance metaphors. According to Stoop, when we consider the quality of an educational experience it is imperative that we remember that we are confronting the personal world of each child. If we hold that what is well taught is well learned, we are denying the student any responsibility; we are denying the student freedom. For it follows that, if in order to learn something well one must be well taught, we must forever be dependent on some "authority outside ourselves" for our growth and development.

Levit warns of this possibility.

> Educational programs are geared to the production of functionaries within a technological society rather than to the development of independent people who are social critics and constructors.(1973:43)

Pincoffs (1973) argues against educational accountability practices by claiming that a great many "excellences" cannot fall under the practice of accounting. His contention is that we can no more determine all the excellences in education than we could finitely determine those things a person must do to be wise, careful, judicious, imaginative, considerate, responsible, clearheaded or humane. Accountability practices appear to

focus on and value only determinate aspects of education. Pincoff (1973:145) suggests that such an orientation "may well lead to practices which are far from producing intellectual excellence and excellence of character".

Liveritti (1976), too, protests against the "scientific, experimental treatment of teaching". He maintains that is it not the definitve quality or characteristic of an act in itself that makes an act a teaching act, but rather it is the intent or purpose of the act which would allow it to be called 'teaching'. In other words, not all explaining, discussing, defining, questioning, telling, understanding, or accomplishing is teaching or learning. Even if a teacher is successfully engaged in the practice of teaching, generalizations about teaching, gleaned from watching that teacher would not always hold everytime and everywhere, not even for that particular teacher since teaching cannot be reduced, as the research shows, to a certain "limited and fixed repertoire of acts". Liveritti makes the point that:

> To the extent, then, that it makes sense to think of teaching as the performance of acts, teaching is the performance of virtually any act what ever, as circumstances might warrant, on an ad hoc basis, with the intent or for the purpose of getting or helping someone to learn some particular lesson.(1976:239)

Smith (1983) describes teachers as having to "live a sort of schizophrenic compromise" because objectives, ends and goals have very little to do with their realities of being with children. For Smith, the present instrumental language of teaching and learning has little to do what is necessary to *be* with children and that in some ways our "empirical objectivist traditions" actually prevent us from hearing the call of the children whom we educate.

The analytic approach to understanding the complexity of pedagogy, inherent in both the production and performance is attacked by Nyberg. "Analysis alone is never enough for understanding anything" (1981:5). It is only a stage in coming to understand since it produces divisions, distinctions and disjointedness and understanding must also involve integration. In order to truly know we must see how things fit together since no action or event can be understood solely in isolation. Educators have persisted in dismantling educational activity and in doing so have managed only piecemeal solutions which often work unsuspectingly at cross-purposes. Nyberg suggests a possibility for extricating ourselves from the resultant confusion lies in directing our efforts at fitting

together that which we have separated by analysis.

E. Alternative Theories and Metaphors

Nyberg's notion that viewing the whole may provide insights into teaching and learning is held by others. Several evaluation theories and methodologies have been espoused which could facilitate an integrative understanding of teaching and learning.

The models of evaluation proposed by people like Stake, Parlett and Hamilton, Jackson, Eisner, and Guba all require that the evaluator place whatever is to be judged in total context, that a more global, less analytic, less problem-solving orientation to evaluation be taken. Most of the more "naturalistic" approaches to evaluation do not have as their base the assumptions present in the performance and production metaphors.

Phenomenologists such as (Denton, 1974) (Vandenberg, 1974) (Phenix, 1974) (Langeveld, 1980) (van Manen, 1980-84) (Grumet, 1984) (Smith, 1984) suggest a different metaphor as a way of understanding what it means to teach. The latter four speak of pedagogy as being like parenting. In this sense teaching is seen as "nurturing", as "providing a protective ground" as "pedagogic care or concern" as "a calling", and as "being responsive to the call of the child". For van Manen, just as a parent hopes, that is, remains open to all the child's possibilities, so, too, must the teacher. He states, "The pedagogue is the adult who shows the child the way in the world"(1982:285). However, *to show* does not mean to decide, ahead of time, on the path and then to make the child walk the path chosen by the adult. *Show* in this sense means that teaching must be seen as a "revealing of the possibilites" of the child. It requires that teachers remain open to the opportunities to reveal the child's possibilities to himself. The language of goals, objectives, performance and functions is inimical to teaching understood in this way.

Seen through the metaphor of parenting, pedagogic competence, according to van Manen, cannot be determined by formulating "a concept or theory of pedagogic competence since we cannot know conceptually what is unknowable in a conceptual way". Pedagogic competence, then, must be seen as an "response to the pedagogic relationship". Pedagogic competence shows itself in our "concrete relationships, activites and situations with children". It does not show itself in our theories, our abstractions, or our conceptualizations about the proper way to function in these relationships.

F. Paradoxes and Contradictions

Evaluation in education can best be described as a string of paradoxes and contradictions. Evaluation models and policies continue to be predicated on the metaphors of production and performance, and even though they have apparently failed to produce anticipated outcomes. Research, which has as its tacit purpose, support of the current ideology, continues despite the repeated evidence that an understanding of what it means to teach is difficult, if not impossible, to come to by relying on analytic, rationalistic models; performance based and results based evaluation procedures continue to show "no significant difference" in student achievement.

Riding and Stufflebeam (1981:4) denounce current evaluation practices by saying that "evaluation promotes a field which is possibly not needed, legitimizes practices which might prove harmful, concentrates attention on matters of little importance, encourages bad practices that are not explicitly prohibited, and impedes innovation."

Sergiovanni, a long time proponent of a rationalistic approach to teacher supervision, concedes that there is:

> ... further a building realization in my own mind and heart that the present theoretical basis for supervisory practice is inadequate, and indeed may be useless.

and that:

> Teaching is, after all, a human act which involves the sharing of ones being in the form of knowledge and spirit and the gathering in of selves and others. Teaching, conceived as a human enterprise, simply does not lend itself to an abstract image of supervision characterized by human perfectability.(1984)

Educational philosophers, theorists, and practitioners continue to demonstrate the dysfunctional nature of the production and performance metaphor, and thus of many of the current evaluation practices; yet, the instrumental, rationalized, technologized orientation to teaching and teacher education and supervision continues. As Curtis and May put it:

> The persuasiveness of this view sometimes tricks people into thinking that there is nothing more to a person than his observable contributions to, his observable effectiveness in, this common pool of activity, and that these contributions, this effectiveness must be public and to be public must be entirely observable. The track-record is the man, so to speak, and track records are public.(1981:64)

or as Barrett writes:

> So long as we can negotiate the triumph of technology successfully we are unconcerned to ask what the presuppositions of this technical world are and

> how they bind us to its framework. Already these presupporitions are so much the invisible medium of our actual life that we have become unconscious of them. We may eventually become so enclosed in them that we cannot even imagine any other way of thought.(1978:223)

Alternative metaphors and models have been articulated but rejected by both practitioners and policy makers outside of academic institutions. As Sergiovanni says:

> Thus when a supervisory mindscape does not fit the world of practice the problem is assumed to be in that world. Rarely is the world accepted for what it is and the prevailing mindscapes challenged or abandoned in favor of others.(1984:13)

Nyberg, cogently describes a phenomena which is certainly descriptive of educational evaluation. He warns us that:

> One of the things authorities and experts do is intimidate nonauthorities and nonexperts. Somehow we have gotten into the habit of ascribing almost managerial rights and privileges to certain social positions, so that the occupants of those positions can assume an attitude of indignation when questioned or challenged. The implication of this attitude is that the questioner is somehow rude or inadequate and that he is failing to recognize his place. The problem is that we have so much training in reverence for competetive achievement that we tend to mix it up with personal worth. We sucker ourselves into believing that we are less worthy, have fewer rights of opinion and have lesser abilities in making decisions than someone who occupies another (usually referred to as higher) social position or who has a different set certificates. That is an entirely different thing than respecting another's clear thinking, insight, skill or sincerity.(1971:151)

It is time for us to turn to practicing teachers to ask them, without preconceived structures, of their experience. Perhaps it is through their insights and reflections that we may come to an understanding of evaluation which is beyond paradox and contradiction.

III. Chapter Three

A. Phenomenological Inquiry

A phenomenological study focuses on exploring aspects of an everyday world which are often taken for granted. According to Shapiro (1983) it is research which concerns itself with the ways people understand, and make sense of their experience. The emphasis is on understanding an experience from the point of view of the one having the experience. In other words, the important question in a phenomenological study, is, "What is this experience like for the participant?" The intention in asking such a question is to enlarge and deepen our understanding of the experience as lived and not as how the participants' perceptions substantiates or disavows whatever beliefs or theories we might have of the experience. As Spiegelberg (1960) maintains, the notion of returning to the things themselves means to return to the phenomena which are often blocked from sight by the theoretical patterns through which we view them. Van Manen holds a similar view.

> Phenomenology is the study of the lifeworld --the world as we immediately experience it rather than as we conceptualize, categorize or theorize about it.(1984:37)

For Misgeld:

> Phenomenological inquiry can help us understand that it cannot be professional knowledge as such which determines the reasons and aims of professional intervention. It can convey the sense and meaning of activities as they are known in life--when life is not yet regulated by standard requirements of a professional practice. It can allude to and evoke the understanding we have of life when we are not yet entirely under the sway of those conceptual and technical exigencies which force us to subsume events and actions under general rules, procedures and policies.(1983:199)

Tiryakian (1978) describes the two central themes of phenomenology as being those of "consciousness" and "world". He sees the task of a phenomenological study to be the description and analysis of human consciousness, because it is through acts of consciousness that we experience the world. We orient ourselves to our world by bestowing meanings and expectations, by structuring our reality and from his perspective, "These meanings and expectations which give us the significance of objects in experience, cannot be deduced from the physical properties of objects" (1978:195). In other words, meaning is not always obvious; sometimes it needs to be discovered.

The method of understanding, for a phenomenologist, lies in the interpretation of the subjective meanings individuals give to their actions, for it is these meanings which

people use to make sense of their world and their behaviour in it. For Barritt et al, (1983:150) the task of the phenomenologist is to "understand the meaning of experience in its personal historical context as much as possible as a totality, embedded in all of its contexts."

In his introductory comments about phenomenology, van Manen (1984) outlines the different aspects of phenomenological research. He reiterates the view that it is the study of experiences, as lived, and that it attempts to see the essences or the essential structures of an experience. He continues by describing phenomenological research as an involving thoughtfulness, as a "minding, heeding, a caring attunement". The important orientation for the researcher is to wonder--to wonder about life, about living. Phenomenological research is a search to be human; it is a way to gain insight into how we might reach our highest potential in being. And, finally, van Manen concludes that phenomenological research is a "poetizing" activity, that is, its point is not to reach conclusions in some prosaic fashion but rather it "tries an incantative, evocative speaking, a primal telling". The project of a phenomenological study is to re-create the experience in such a way as the reader, having similar experiences, might nod and say, "Yes, that is what it is like."

To look at teacher evaluation from a phenomenological approach, is to look at the experience from a new perspective. It is to look beyond the theories, perceptions or beliefs of the participants or the theoreticians to remain open to the phenomena as they are experienced, in the case of this study, by teachers.

To remain open to the lived experience is no easy task, especially at a time when so much is being written and said about teacher evaluation. The theories are persuasive; they appear to substantiate the views of both educators and the public. The notion of evaluation for improved quality seems so reasonable. As Zaner states:

> The "natural propensity" inherent in us in our daily lives is to be blithely about our affairs as if things really were as we believe them to be.(1970:95)

The project of this study, is to look beyond the beliefs we may have about evaluation of teachers, to listen to teachers' concrete descriptions of their experiences and in this way to come to a deeper understanding of what the experience of being evaluated is really like for teachers.

B. Doing a Phenomenological Study

According to Barritt et al:

> The value of phenomenological research is not assured by methodological orthodoxy but rather by the researcher's ability to express the shared experience in an understandable way.(1983:142)

While strict adherence to procedural techniques is not the primary concern in doing a phenomenological study there are some common practices such as those described by van Manen (1984). These practices include:

1. Identifying what deeply interests me and identifying this interest as a true phenomena, that is, as some experience that human beings live through.
2. Getting the participants to recall the experience in such a way that the essential aspects, the meaning structure of this experience, as lived through is revealed.
3. Making use of the researcher's own experience, the history of key words, or the recounting of the experience of others as gleaned through reading.
4. Conducting a thematic analysis in an attempt to uncover the essential themes.
5. Constructing a possible interpretation of the nature of the experience.

Similar patterns of doing phenomenological research are advocated by Barritt et al (1984), Von Eckartsbert (1978), Silvers (1984) and Spiegelberg (1960). While the method in which a researcher proceeds may vary, the orientation to the task is consistent, in that the phenomenologist must remain open to the experience as it reveals itself in a variety of contexts. As Speigelberg states:

> There is little that the beginning phenomenologist can be given by way of precise instructions beyond such metaphoric phrases as "opening his eyes", "keeping them open", "not getting blinded", and "looking and listening".(1960:660)

the participants

Experience with the investigated topic and articulateness are, for Colaizzi (1978) sufficient criteria for selecting subjects. Silvers (1984), however, suggests that both researcher and participants must be able to speak reflectively on the topic. For him, reflective discourse is the tension between what we say and what we finally discover when we reflect on what has been said. Reflective thinking is necessary in the attempt to discover the interpretive roots of the intended meaning.

The five teachers who were the primary focus of this study all have recent experiences of being evaluated. The school jurisdication in which they teach implemented a teacher evaluation policy in September, 1982. According to the policy, teachers who are in their first or second year of teaching shall be evaluated "summatively" and all other teachers shall be evaluated "formatively" each year.

The policy describes a summative evaluation as being:

> Evaluation, designed to perform a judgmental function, the results of which are used for making decisions for the purposes of employment (hiring, continuing contract, promotion, transfer, termination) or certification (permanent certification, suspension of certification and decertification).

and a formative observation as being:

> Observation designed to perform a developmental function, the results of which are used to help improve performance or increase potential for performance through identifying areas of strength or areas requiring improvement and growth.

A teacher's performance in the classroom is judged on the basis of general categories, each of which includes a number of specific criteria. The general categories include:

curriculum

preparation

presentation of lesson

evaluation of students

environmental arrangements

pupil-teacher relationships

clerical responsibilities

professional conduct

appearance

relationship with' colleagues

relationship with students

relationship with administration

relationship with parents / guardians

use of time.

Each of the participants has been evaluated according to the policy at least once and three of them have had two such evaluations. In addition to these experiences, all of

the participants have been evaluated for permanent certification or for permanent contracts. They have been observed by a variety of educators including Faculty of Education consultants, central office personnel and school administrators.

Their teaching experience ranges from three to thirteen years; three of the teachers are females; two are males. Two of them teach special education classes; one is an elementary teacher and the other two teach in junior high schools.

All of these teachers were selected on the basis of both their ability and their willingness to reflect on what it was like for them to have someone come into their classrooms and watch and then make judgments about their abilities to teach.

exploring the experience

Van Manen (1984) suggests two fundamental requisites of anyone doing a phenomenological study. The first is an appreciation of the importance of having had a real life experience, that is, the importance of having had a personal experience with the phenomena to be studied. The second is a recognition of the value of "having read deeply and widely".

He outlines different sources that might be used in doing a phenomenological study. These include:

using personal experiences
tracing etymological sources
searching idiomatic phrases
obtaining experiential descriptions from others
locating experiential descriptions in literature or art
consulting phenomenological literature

Van Manen encourages the beginning phenomenologist to explore personal experiences. He says that "in drawing up personal descriptions of lived experiences, the phenomenologist knows that one's own experiences are also the possible experiences of others"(1984:51). An awareness of the structures of our own experiences can provide direction for the search.

Whether a phenomenological study starts with a personal experience or with the accounts of others, the important element is to explicate the experience as concretely as

possible. It is the phenomenologist's task to elicit concrete examples, examples which reveal the "most immediate and close experiential contact" with the phenomena. Spiegelberg refers to the importance of using examples.

> In order to apprehend the general essence we have to look at particulars 'as examples', that is, an instances which stand for general essence.(1960:678)

He warns; however, that:

> It is certainly possible to see these particulars without seeing general essence. But it is not possible to see them as particulars without seeing the general essence which they particularize. Thus what happens is that on the basis of seeing particulars in their structural affinities, we also become aware of the ground of their affinities, the pattern of essence.

Von Eckartsbert (1978) sees this part of a phenomenological study as being a cooperative venture between researcher and participants. Researcher and subjects are "co-researchers", "co-discussants" engaged in a dialogical process in which both return to the illustrative events as a means of amplifying and deepening the understanding of the experience. For Von Eckartsbert, the dialogue between researcher and participant spans many levels of discourse which includes:

> being perceptually concrete and descriptive, being reflectively universalizing, being poetically metaphorical-symbolic, being bodily emotionally affected, being imaginative, being questioning.

Each of the five teachers participating in this study was interviewed, using an open-ended style of questioning. The interviews began with the teachers being asked to describe as concretely as possible, a time when they were observed or evaluated. The participants were encouraged to avoid talking about any perceptions, beliefs or explanations they might have had regarding the experience and to try to remain as descriptive as they could of the events which lead up to, surrounded and followed their evaluation. During the interview, the participants were encouraged to remember other examples or to reflect more fully on the examples they had chosen to begin their descriptions..

As themes began to emerge from the teachers' talk, I returned to them as a way of getting a deeper understanding of their experiences. The follow-up resulted in new examples and at other times we would delve more deeply into the original illustrative event.

While the interview material was the primary source, I talked informally with many other teachers regarding their experiences or their views of the themes which were

emerging in the study. Descriptions from literature sources were also used which were in keeping with the views of van Manen and with Roche, who stated that:

> There is not a better way to expose features and presuppositions of social situations (otherwise unremarked and not seen for what they are) than by getting a perspective from a fictional construction.(1973:317)

Finally, the etymology of key words was researched and I looked to phenomenological authors like Sartre, Merleau Ponty, Heidegger, Barthes, and Marcel in an attempt to get insights into the experience.

interpreting the talk

The first step in making sense of the talk is to detemine to what it is that the talk points, that is, to look for the themes. The way this is done is to extract particular words or phrases from the text which are reflective of the experience for the participants. In the interpretation state the important questions are:

1. Is there a part of the talk that is evocative of the essence of the experience?
2. Can the description be reworded to retain the meaning of the statement while getting deeper than the specific example?

These pointings are, then, re-ordered so as to give a sense of unity of the experience. It is in this way that the themes begin to reveal themselves. It is this step which, according to Colaizzi (1978) and Spiegelberg, (1960) requires creative insight or intuitive understanding.

In searching through the descriptions, it is often necessary to move back and forth from themes, to pointings, to the original descriptions. In doing this sometimes new themes show themselves; the way themes could be grouped may become clarrified or unique or unusual themes may become evident. van Manen (1984) and Barritt et al (1984) both refer to the value of returning not only to the original text but to discuss the emerging themes with the participants of the study.

writing a phenomenological description

Van Manen (1984) outlines some possible means of organizing the final phenomenological description. The description can be organized "thematically", that is, around the essential themes derived in the interpretation stage. The task can be

approached "analytically" by searching for an increasingly deeper understanding of the experience or the writer might make use of examples as a way of illustrating the essential meaning of the experience. Filling out the description by varying the use of examples, or writing "exemplicatively" is the third method he delineates. Another way to organize the writing is "existentially", that is, the author builds the description of the experience around the existential themes of time, space, body and relationships. The researcher would ask questions like, "In what way do teachers who are being evaluated experience time and space differently?" Lastly, the writing might be organized "exegetically" by using the text of another phenomenological writer as dialogue around which the researcher's own material is woven.

A combination of any of these methods might also be used. The decision as to the style for the phenomenological description is as much dependent on the phenomena studied as it is on the researcher's choice.

The description of the experience of evaluation by teachers in this study, is a combination of the strategies outlined by van Manen.

IV. Chapter Four

A. Evaluation in the Lives of Teachers

My principal told me that he must do my annual evaluation this week. I notice an uneasiness creep into my being. I wonder why. I am a good teacher. Over the years, I have amassed a collection of reports that ought to allay any fears. Principals, superintendents and assistants have sat in my classroom, watching and making judgments about my ability to teach; they have made ticks on a check list, written comments and discussed their observations with me. They have said:

... has good rapport with students
... is a very capable teacher, intelligent and has a personable manner
... is a valuable addition to our staff
... is a most competent and effective teacher
... is dedicated to the teaching profession and to students
... has a genuine concern for her colleagues and their welfare
... has an obvious concern for the well being of every child
... imparts an enthusiasm for learning to students.

It is not only these ticks and comments which allow me to claim to be a good teacher. I know it also from the faces of the children I have taught, from letters which say, "to a wonderful teacher and friend," and from parents who have called to say, "Thank you!"

I ought to look forward to my principal's evaluation of me; I do not. My sense of unease persists; it all seems so meaningless, I wonder on what the disquietude is centered; on what the sense of meaninglessness is grounded and why the notion of evaluation for improved quality rings hollow. The wondering is piqued by my colleague who spontaneously echoes my thoughts when she says:

> Here's another evaluation. So what. What difference will it make. Well, we'll get a little anxious and a little frightened -- wear a new dress that day -- make a good visual impression and when it's over it won't mean anything.

as nagging thorn

When teachers speak of their experience of being evaluated, their talk is first of fear, anxiousness and nervousness. All five of the primary participants in the study consider themselves to be good teachers, a judgment they base on their formal evaluations and on comments from students, colleagues and parents. Yet all of them began their interviews with a description of the anxiety with which they faced their

evaluation.

> ... I was really nervous.
> ... I have lots of fear, lots of anxiety.
> ... I was really scared - she was very intimidating.
> ... I trust him (principal) a lot and I was nervous and I was frightened.
> ... My voice was trembling.
> ... I was a nervous wreck.
> ... Despite the fact that I've know him (evaluator) since grade seven, it makes me nervous.
> ... I was all upset and flustered. I told myself there was no need. I was doing this before anyone came in so why should I be upset now.

Mark begins his interview by saying, "I was nervous and when I'm nervous I'm really nervous. I ..." He stops mid sentence, reflecting, his hand shakes visibly, he rubs his eyes, pushes back his hair and pauses. I have the sense that he is reliving the experience. "God it was pain," he sighs, as he returns to the interview.

I, too, recall the nervousness that comes with being watched and with the knowing that I was to be watched. My principal was to come into my room in the late afternoon. By lunch time there was a knot, small but noticeable in my stomach and I was unable to concentrate on the staff room conversation, and by the time my principal arrived in my classroom the knot was a mass of hardness, solid and unmoving. I began the class by handing out papers which shook noticeably. My voice was out of control; it shook, squeaked and disappeared completely.

Sebastian speaks most passionately, about his feelings regarding evaluation. He describes it as being something that is always in the back of your mind, of something that preys on you, of hating it. He laments:

> I don't care what they call it -- observation or visitation, to me it is an evaluation and it's a nagging thorn.

Adams writes of a teacher's "profound confrontation" and maintains that:

> The teacher, by contrast, alone in the front with all eyes on him, must say in effect, "I offer myself to you. You can look at my body, watch my movements, criticize my statements, estimate my status, penetrate my pretentions, wonder where I buy my clothes, imagine how I live."(1980:153)

He goes on to suggest that a teacher must endure this intimate disclosure, in increasing detail, each time he meets the class until he finally wins the trust of the students and overcomes, what he describes as being, a "mutual alienation'. Only when the sense of distance between teacher and class is bridged, continues Adams, can students learn anything from the teacher.

Mark's description of his experience confirms the point of view of Adams. He describes the evaluator as being a "kink in the chemistry'. He says that in teaching all the things have to combine together, the teacher, the students, the lesson. He tells of how, when no one else is in the room, he and his students are comfortable but when the principal comes in, "he is not with us and that is not a comfortable feeling'.

Jessie's description is similar.

> I feel confident in presenting myself to students but not when there's someone else in the room who is watching me.

Teachers often speak of the importance of a sense of *we* in the classroom, and of how this communion is broken by the presence of the observer.

> We're in this together.
>
> It's not what the kids can do for me or what I can do to them; it's what, together we can do.
>
> Instead of being in tune with the children, I tried to make them move in tune with me or with what I thought the principal wanted.
>
> He sits at the back watching and writing notes. I am watching him and the class is watching him.

Dennis speaks of the "lack of disclosure" on the part of the evaluator. He says that in his classroom there is a give and take experience with the kids, that there is a sense of things going back and forth but when someone is sitting at the back of the room observing it's different; things are going to that person and the individual is under no obligation to give anything back.

> He doesn't have to give anything of himself; he just sits there watching, taking and giving nothing in return.

"At least the old inspectors got up there and taught", says another teacher.

Evaluation has been and still is seen by teachers as a kind of trial. In a book entitled, Gladly Would He Teach, Chambers paints a picture of the early teacher escaping at recess from the "ominous presence" of the inspector and concludes his own account of an inspector's visit with the words, "and the ordeal was over for another year." Morgan in his book, Chalkdust in my Blood, explains that the prospect of evaluation, "hung all winter, like a menacing shadow over his head". In, Cries from the Corridor, McLaren speaks of being "put on the carpet".

Mark concurs with his colleagues from years past.

> I just felt relieved I don't have to go through it for another year.

Teachers attempt to overcome the alienation which results from the presence of the observer in the classroom. They, sometimes, enlist the participation of the students in the process or they encourage the illusion that the observer is really there to see what the students are doing.

Noelle and Jessie describe how they make their students a part of the experience.

> I told them that he was coming and why he was coming and who he was and they were all smiling -- it was my homeroom, a really good set of kids and they were all smiling and really being good. Lots of kids who normally did not answer questions had their hands up and were really being very co-operative.
>
> The kids were told that the principal would be coming in. - They were told so that they would not allow the evaluator's presence to disturb them ---so they could engage in discussion as they normally would.

Another teacher who was evaluated in her physical education class describes how the kids thought the principal was in to watch them. She did nothing to correct that notion. Another teacher told his class that the reason for the administrator's presence was that he was in to "see them".

The presence of the third person in the classroom severs the sense of *we* which teacher and students experience. The teacher stands alone, vulnerable and anxious, sometimes seeking refuge in a conspiracy with or against the students and sometimes seeking refuge in playing a role.

> You're consciously aware that there is someone else. You're aware of how and what you say. It's a presentation, not for the students but to the principal. When it was over, I felt relieved I was not going to have to go through that for another year. Relieved it's over and done with, and I can get on with my job.

as rehearsed performance

> The night before ... I went to my room early and taught and retaught the lesson to the dresser, the chair and the pillows. Then in bed, I rehearsed it until I drifted off to sleep. Next day, I taught the lesson again, but the pupils did not always respond as did the inanimate objects in my room.

There are several parallels between teaching for an evaluator and doing a show or a performance. Teachers, in speaking of their evaluation experience, make analogies regarding costumes, script, timing, voice and audience, all elements of staging an act.

"I even got dressed for the part," Sebastian discloses. "I wore a tie, my suit, the whole bit." Noelle, too, describes, wearing a new dress on that day and I remember selecting attire more consciously on the day my principal was coming to *see* me. I remember choosing my grey suede suit, attractive and conservative, the kind of thing

which will likely get me past the "uses professional discretion in dress" criteria of the teacher evaluation policy. The importance of dress on evaluation day is expressed by another teacher who claims, "I was trying to speak perfectly; trying to dress perfectly for the day."

References to the notion of role playing, to not being oneself, are frequent. In relating a time when she had been evaluated, on her request, by a member of the central office staff, Jessie uses these words:

> I knew exactly what time, what day the individual was coming in ---down to the last second, I had it planned exactly what I was going to do ---what I was going to say. As you well know when you're dealing with kids things don't happen that way. As it happened the kids were five minutes late coming from phys-ed and that threw me into an absolute panic because I had worked out my performance right down to the last movement.

"I feel like I'm play acting," says Noelle as she describes the importance she placed on finishing on cue when the principal was in the room observing her. The class was involved in a discussion and it was obvious to Noelle that the discussion had ended but there were five minutes to bell time. According to Noelle, she would, on any other occasion, have wrapped up the discussion and given the kids the remaining minutes to talk with each other, but because her principal was there she did not; she made the lesson fit the bell.

> The discussion was ready to end and normally I would have stopped it and said, "OK, you have the last five minutes to do whatever you want." It was getting ridiculous but I didn't because (principal) was there.

Teachers' talk also makes obvious the unusual attention paid to the use of voice as a part of the performance. They use phrases like, "the main thing is what comes out of my mouth - so I don't trip up" or "I was trying to speak perfectly" or "was I speaking correctly" or "was I projecting my voice to the corners of the room" or "I worried about varying my voice appropriately". Usually they were not aware nor concerned about their voices; however, when being evaluated much of their awareness was focused on their voices.

In the presence of an evaluator, disciplining students was also viewed as a kind of performance. Three participants spoke of how they were different, how their response to inappropriate behaviour was artifical, and how their interpretation of student behaviour was altered by the evaluator's presence.

The way teachers view the students in the class changes. Rather than seeing the students as individuals with particular ways of behaving, they were seen as potential disrupters - as potential trouble makers. Behavior that would have been considered tolerable or perhaps not even noticed, in the presence of the evaluator, presented itself as an obligation to "perform discipline".

> I was much more aware of kids shuffling papers, or dropping pens or turning around. Normally, its not worth the trouble of dealing with that kind of behaviour. I find it easier to ignore it only with him (evaluator) in there you can't..
>
> The first thing I hoped was that the kids were doing what they were supposed to be doing---glad kids who were supposed to be sitting in their desks were actually sitting in their desks. Obviously sometimes it doesn't happen.

Students' behaviour which might otherwise be interpreted from a context of understanding and caring for the student as a unique individual is likely to be viewed more objectively and is sometimes exaggerated out of perspective. Inappropriate student behaviour, however insignificant is now a call to do something, not so much for the benefit of the student, but for the benefit of the evaluator. Mark remembers disciplining a child when his supervisor was in the room.

> I'd have handled it totally different if someone wasn't in the room. Just before I did it (reprimanded a student) I thought, "I have to do something now and I have to do it so it looks good. I have to handle it properly." If no one was in the classroom I would have been more relaxed about it but I wasn't; I was threatened by the fact that I had to **perform** (his emphasis) discipline in front of my evaluator.

In a book entitled Don't Smile Until Christmas beginning teachers, who perhaps experience the molding hand of evaluations, most frequently, attest again and again to this loss of self, to this abandonment of what is real to some preordained role called "teacher'. These beginning teachers speak of how, in order to survive, they had to take on the role of acting like a teacher, of feeling compelled to shut down their spontaneity, and of sounding as though they memorized a script. They write of having periodic lapses into their actual personality and of the tension and inner conflict which results when the way you're expected to act as a teacher is different from the way you really want to act as a person.

> Teaching was very much like acting. I wrote down nearly everything I planned to say, all of the examples I intended to use and every question I wanted to ask. This kept me near the desk, close to the script. I frequently heard myself as though someone else was talking, as though I was playing a role.
>
> I began, in other words, to develop a consciousness of myself as an actor

portraying a teacher, not of me being myself.

> I learned ... that in order to survive in the classroom I had to take on the persona of someone acting as teacher. That is, I had to shut down spontaneity and candidness on my part and in their place put on a calculated facade of teacher.
>
> One of the most surprising things a first year teacher learns is that his official role in the classroom does not permit him the luxury of being himself.

Frustration and a sense of futility show through when teachers talk of performing for the evaluator. Sebastian looks past me, his voice softens and almost breaks as he says:

> It makes me try to be perfect ---try to do it the way I think others want me to do it. I am not myself in an evaluation.

And, Mark, points to the futility of evaluation by ending his interview with:

> I firmly believe that a person can pass on evaluation because it's based on technique. It's like playing a game called playing teacher - but to me that's not what teaching is ---far from it.

as fine tuning

Another theme which shows itself in teachers' descriptions of evaluation, is that evaluation fosters a belief that there is a right way of teaching. The underlying assumption of teacher evaluation is that there are particular, discrete skills, which if a teacher can demonstrate proficiency in performing, she will be awarded the label "good teacher". As Sebastian contends, evaluation at best, is about "the odd little fine-tuning", and that, I sense, is definitely not what Sebastian means when he tells me he is a good teacher.

The implication inherent in most evaluation policies is that teaching is a technical activity; however, teachers know intuitively that technique is only a small part of what it really means to be a good teacher.

According to Mark, "Technique takes high priority when the evaluator is in the room." He goes on to explain the problematic nature of such an orientation by pointing out that a poor teacher can know about certain techniques of discipline and can play the game of technique during an evaluation. He is aware of concentrating on technique when an evaluator is in his room; he speaks of making sure he asked everyone a question, of circulating around the room, of having to "do something" if anyone is talking. He describes his behaviour as being "so superficial", and bangs his hand on his thigh as though to emphasis his belief that this is only a small part of what education is really about.

Noelle's description of her experience with evaluation is full of references to the way in which evaluation encourages an instrumental view of good teaching. Noelle spends a great deal of time listening to her students, trying to understand and allay their fears and insecurites. She greets her students by name as they come into the room; she asks them about their lives outside of school and prides herself on being available after school for students who want extra help or just want to talk. Her students are responsive to her obvious caring and as a result behaviour problems in her class room are few.

Despite all this, one of Noelle's first thoughts when she was told that she was to be evaluated was, "Oh, he is going to think that I'm not a good disciplinarian," as though to be seen as good disciplinarian required that she do some disciplining, that is, that she mete out some arbitrary consequence. Only in behaving in this way would she be able to demonstrate that she was in control of the classroom or that she was competent in the techniques of discipline.

Evaluation creates a heightened awareness of method, not as a way to create a meaningful lesson, but rather an awareness of method for method's sake, or method as a way of satisfying the evaluator.

> When I was giving back the exam, I think I did it slower than I would other times, I probably explained more. I just took up more time doing it than I normally would have because I thought maybe that is what he wanted me to do.

> I once taught a lesson that was very well rehearsed. I taught that lesson for the person at the back of the room. I don't think the kids got anything out of that lesson because I was too concerned with what I was doing --- whether I was speaking correctly ---did I have the equipment set up the right way ---did I have my worksheets ready ---did I hand them out the right way.

Three participants make explicit reference to remembering, at the time of evaluation, specific techniques that they had learned about in university. From their comments, there is a sense that they have all tried these techniques, unsuccessfully, and have developed alternative methods which work for them. The presence, of an evaluator, sends them scurrying back to try to implement techniques which long ago they have abandoned as unworkable.

> I was aware of the things that they tell you at university that don't mean anything when you get into the classroom anyway.

> All those things from the university that never worked for you come back to you because you assume that's what the evaluator wants to see.

> I was trying to do all those artificial extra little things they say you should in those C.I. classes.

The belief, created by evaluation, that teaching is something that goes on outside the teacher and is the result of doing certain things right is evidenced by the increased importance given to plan books both by evaluators and by teachers. Sebastian says during the seven or eight years of teaching when there was no evaluation policy that he never kept a plan book as such, but he always knew where he was going. Now he has to present his plan book to his evaluator so he now keeps extensive well-organized notes. He smiles as he concludes, "Maybe that's a good point!"

Mark is more dramatic in his thoughts about the virtues of a plan book.

> The big thing about evaluation for me is going through my lesson plans. I don't know if I'm doing it right. I do it the way I do it because I can follow it. When they go through my lesson book I think Oh my God - am I writing enough, not enough, is it clear. I just hate it when he flips through my book, my writing is terrible. When he goes through my book, I just want to say, Oh God, here we go on technique again!

as empty comment

> Then I felt angry when the report came out and said what a good job we were doing and pointed to a few discrepancies in the program and I thought how could they really know this if they only sat in everyone else's class for fifteen minutes? How could they know anything? It was like an empty comment.

Kate's notion of the remarks of evaluator as empty comment are reiterated again and again by teachers.

Throughout Mark's interview his commitment to his students surfaces. He tells how he is a terrible speller, and how he needs to carry a dictionary, how he encourages the kids to find his spelling mistakes on the board. He turns his poor spelling into an opportunity to share his "human weaknesses" with the class. He uses it as starting point for talking to his class of learning disabled students about not only the need for compassion for the weaknesses of others but the equally important need for tolerance of our own weaknesses. He talks of teaching as being, "like parenting". He tells of the love he has for his job and you know that what he really speaks of is his "love for his students". Of this, intense and pervasive caring the evaluator writes, " Mark has a good rapport with his students."

Says Mark, "I felt short changed, all I got was statements --generalized comments."

Jessie's story is similar. When asked whether or not she had a positive evaluation she replied, "Yes, I mean,I guess so." "Look at this," she says, pointing to the comment on

her evaluation which reads, "Jessie, has good control of her classroom."

> I'm not even interested in controlling my students. My main concern is how I relate to the students in my class---what we together are able to do ---not what I can do to them or what they will do for me---what we can do together to help them grow. What's important is what I am able to do with the students with whom I work.

With a hint of cynicism, Sebastian talks of how the administrator who had evaluated him last year had commented that he had noticed commercial rather than student made posters on the walls. He tells of how he feels he must arrange a project before the evaluator comes in this year so that he can have "All this crap on the wall."

> Look at my walls now (they are barren, save for some commercial posters, and news clippings)---they've been like that for seven months now. I'm the focus of attention in this class---the work that the kids **are** (he emphasizes are) doing should be the focus---it's nice to have teasers on the wall but it's a waste of time.

He finishes by saying that despite all this, he is organizing a paint class so there will be something on the wall when the adminstrator comes to do Sebastian's evaluation. Shrugging his shoulders, he tells me that he'll be doing coloring and pasting and cutting in the next two weeks.

This notion of the "worthness" of a judgment is called forth, in Kate's description of a parent, who after having complained to the principal about the way in which Kate was teaching reading, asked to be a parent volunteer in the classroom. She tells how, because she wanted that mother to understand how different the reading abilities of the students were, and why the program was so diverse, she assigned the mother the task of listening to individual children read and of asking questions. Within three weeks, her parent volunteer apologized to Kate for having evaluated her reading program on the basis of what her eight year old son had said at home. In Kate's words:

> She thanked me for the learning experience. She said she was glad her son had me for a teacher. I guess that comment was worth more to me than any of my peers saying I'm doing a good job. Now she really did understand what I was trying to do.

as plea for understanding

The research of Knoblack and Goldstein (1971) focuses on the loneliness and alienation experienced by teachers in public schools. They contend that basically:

> What our teachers and what many classroom teachers are experiencing is a rather painful realization that they are separate from themselves, their children, and other adults in the school.

Their findings indicate that teachers, who might once have sought support in dealing with classroom issues soon learn not to seek help. The response these teachers get is likely to be a subtle message that what they are trying is threatening to the way things are usually done in the school. At best they are given "how to" advice or directed to textbooks which deal with the technicalities of a problem but which miss the essential point of the teachers' concern, which almost always revolves around a concern for the way they are to be with the children in their classrooms. In short, teachers stop asking for help because they no longer believe that the authorities in the school will truly understand their concern. The study suggests that what teachers are desperately seeking is an opportunity to talk to someone who will have compassion and a deep understanding of what it is really like to be with children, in schools.

This plea for understanding, also, stands forth when teachers describe their experiences with regard to evaluation. Underlying many of their concerns is the notion that the evaluator understands what they are trying to do, that the evaluator sees their actions, not as fragmented, technical skills, but as having a more, integrated meaning.

The lack of confidence in the evaluator's ability, or perhaps even willingness to understand is deep; teachers sometimes, do not even trust that the obvious will be understood. When the principal came in to evaluate Jessie, a guest speaker was conducting the class discussion and Jessie was sitting in one of the student's desks. She was concerned that the principal might not understand.

> What I remember most is thinking I hope I have a chance to talk to him so that I can explain the change in my role; so I can explain why I'm just sitting here. I just wanted to make sure that he knew why that program was set up---that he knew what we were trying to do. I was concerned about sitting there---that he would understand that I wasn't just really sitting.

The theme is echoed by the others. Noelle believes that an evaluation means you are making a value judgment that you are saying something is good or bad. She wonders how that can be done because what works for one person doesn't necessarily work for the other. She describes evaluation as being a one way street.

> There are very few times in anyone's life when an evaluation would be anything other than a one way street. It is someone saying, "This is how I see you and this is how I judge you" and that is it. There is no way of changing that judgment. It doesn't matter the justification you give for your actions. The judgment doesn't change.

Kate speaks of feeling cheated because the evaluator did not stay long enough to really see what she was doing. In order to accommodate the diverse reading abilities in her classroom, the children were working on individual activites. They were not all in their desks; they were not all reading from readers; they were working on projects all over the room. When the assistant superintendent came she remembers thinking that she was glad he had come on that day because now he could see that kids could carry on activities all over the classroom on their own. The assistant superintendent stayed only a short while and then left; he never did talk to Kate about what he saw.

The teachers, to whom I talked consistently expressed the hope that through the process of evaluation they would finally have an opportunity to talk to someone. They were equally consistent in their resignation that such was not the case. Evaluation was futile, they believed, because they were already better at identifying their own strengths and weakness than any of the people who had been observing in their classroom. They all had had opportunities to to talk to the evaluator before the evaluation and to discuss their reports after the evaluation but as one of the participants put it:

> At the end of the week we discussed the evaluation point by point. Sure I felt good about that---we all like to hear something positive once in a while, get a pat on the back, but I was left with the feeling that we didn't really talk.

Sebastian explains that all his evaluations have been positive, but that he finds little satisfaction in the comments. "I don't need that, I just don't need it. I know what I'm doing well; they don't really even notice those things." He goes on to say that he needs suggestions, someone with whom he can talk. Reflecting on his first year of teaching, he concludes, that it was then he especially wished there had been someone with whom he could have shared his concerns.

The others share the belief in the importance and value of having someone with whom they can just talk.

> The comments I got weren't enough so I had to go and ask other people and think of ways to improve what I felt I needed to improve. I need to have feedback.

> I want more from an evaluation. Evaluators should be master teachers and if they are they should share it with me. I want to know how to be a good educator which I feel I'm becoming through no help from my evaluations.

> I feel I'm a good teacher but I don't have anything real to back it up---no gauge---I can't measure it---it's just intuitive. I still have to do it all by myself, all I get from evaluation is generalized comments; it's futile.

> I know where I'm weak. I don't need anyone who comes into my classroom to evaluate me. I need someone to talk to, someone who understands what I'm trying to do.

Teachers do need other educators they can trust to understand, with whom they can work together in finding the best ways of being with the children in their care, and who will be compassionate, supportive and encouraging. As one participant, maintains:

> Teachers want recognition, they want someone to notice, they want to be encouraged but I don't think we need a whole evaluation system just so we can get a little support for the job we're trying to do.

Just what is this job that they are trying to do? After talking, writing and returning again to these five teachers, the sense that you get is that what they are trying to do is be *with* and *for* the students in their classes in a deeply human way and that what they wanted was to be supported in being *with* and *for* the children who they teach.

V. Chapter Five

A. Evaluation as a way of Encouraging Inauthentic Being

Of what does the language of teacher evaluation speak?

Curriculum guides referenced. Check.

Lesson plans present. Check.

Student work on walls. Check.

Rapport established. Check.

Corrective systems functioning. Check.

Feedback systems functioning. Check.

Daily register complete. Check

The language of teacher supervision is, "no matter what they call it---evaluation, observation or visitation", an instrumental language. It is a language which re-creates teachers as mere functions of which there can be no undisclosed parts. It is a language of performance and technique, empty of experiential comment; it is a language which separates doing and being. It is a language which "wears the mask of being" yet is almost devoid of being. Evaluation of teachers advocates and, indeed, asks for what Heidegger would call "inauthentic being" or what Sartre would say is "bad-faith" or what Laing would describe as being a "false position".

How does evaluaton of teachers create a false position? What is it that allows teachers to say that what the evaluator looks for is "not what teaching is about---far from it"? In what way can we understand the mode of teaching encouraged by teacher evaluation to be an inauthentic form of being?

the self-deception of separating self from actions

When judgments are made we often hear the one making them say, "I am not judging you; I am judging what you are doing." When we claim to judge actions but not the person acting, we imply that we are separate from our actions, that what we do has nothing to do with who we are. Teacher evaluation carries the implication that teachers' functions have nothing to do with their being. Yet teachers do not speak of someone coming in to evaluate their teaching skills. Rather they speak of 'the principal coming in to

evaluate me' or they say, "I am going to be evaluated".

When teachers are evaluated they are, in a sense, being asked to distance themselves from their actions. They are being asked, in effect, to stand outside their teaching. How is it that they are to separate themselves from their teaching when they are involved in it, when they know they are it? Can they console themselves with the remark that any judgment that is made is only about their teaching behaviours and not about them as teachers? When the principal identifies that which needs improvement, teachers do not understand that to be outside of them. It is not just their skills that are not good; it is they who are not good teachers; it is they who need improvement.

anxiety as a false position

Anxiety comes from knowing that despite what evaluation policies imply, it is the teachers themselves who are being judged. Teachers say "I was nervous; I was frightened; I was upset." In what sense can we say that an anxious teacher is in a false position?

Vandenberg, Merleau-Ponty and Sartre remind us that moods or feelings are not just in us, that if I am feeling despair, for example, it is not just in me but the despair is also in my world. When I am depressed, the day is heavy; the dishes in the sink are heavy with expectation; the effort it takes to respond to others is great. Everyone and everything I turn to is as dull and heavy and lifeless as my mood. My mood illuminates my world and my world reflects my mood. It is my feeling that creates, as Vandenberg would say, the significations which things assume for me.

In the same way, when I am anxious, I *see* only an anxious world. Anxiety heightens and intensifies the activity inside. I notice things that I do not otherwise notice---my heart beating, my breathing, my stomach rumbling. When I am anxious my mind is scurrying here and there and my world is equally frantic.

When I am anxious, I am only able to see things as fragments. I catch fleeting instances but I cannot concentrate. If I lay awake at night anxiously waiting for someone to come home, I hear bits of sounds I do not notice on other nights---a creak here, a car door closing there. The sounds stand out, isolated from any context, magnified and suddenly very significant.

Anxious teachers, too, notice things that they normally do not notice. They are conscious of their actions and of everything that is happening to their bodies. Teachers speak of not being familiar with their bodies, of their gestulating hands being strange appendages. Even the cadence and pitch of their voices are unfamiliar; it is not their voices that they hear. They say, "I am not myself."

Anxious teachers live in an anxious world. What assumes significance in the classroom is that which reflects back the anxiety within. In light of their impressions of themselves, they are compelled to see the students in a similar way. When they are *out of control* so too are the students. Behaviour which had no significance when they *are themselves* now is startling. A voice asking for a pen, a chair scrapping on the floor, a book dropping demand attention. Teachers who are nervous cannot respond calmly or with patient caring. Rather, like a fear-filled animal they lash out. When the feeling inside is uneasy and disturbed then the actions of the students cannot but be seen as potential disturbances. Their world cannot be other than they are.

Laing says that when we are anxious, we are going around in a whirl, going everywhere and getting nowhere. When this happens we often say that *we are not ourselves*. In this sense to be anxious is to be in a false position.

For Laing, as long as *we are not ourselves* our life, in effect, comes to a stop. In our franticness we can never move forward; we go around and around until we are "burned-out", that is, until the experience no longer contains anything of ourselves. When we do not nor cannot put anything of ourselves into what we do, says Marcel, we feel empty. Similarily, when we put ourselves into something that is intrinsically meaningless to ourself, we feel equally empty. In both case we are reduced to a kind of inauthentic being.

performance as inauthentic being

The notion of teaching as performance is so pervasive in evaluation theory that even before the principal comes in to do the observation teachers can be to heard to say, "Do not come during this period because I am not teaching." What they mean is that the students will be viewing a film, writing an exam, reading a story, doing individual work or working in groups. If the teacher is not doing something "in front of the class" both

teacher and evaluator see it as an inappropriate time to do an observation of teaching.

It is as though whatever teachers are doing with their students is not teaching, that teaching is some *thing* that is executed in a proper or established manner. In other words, to teach is to perform in the denotative sense of the word. To teach is to carry into effect; to act, as before an audience; to fulfill certain expectations or to carry to completion a prescribed course of action.

From the teachers' perspective, teacher supervision insists on a performance in the most prosaic sense. Teachers speak of the meaningless of rehearsing a part, of planning down to the last question, of finishing to the bell. They speak of the futility of having to act in some pre-scribed fashion, of projecting their voices to the corners of the room or of circulating around the classroom. They tell of the phoniness of performing discipline just so the evaluator will be able to see that they have control of their classrooms. In short, they see themselves as having to play some role called "teacher".

Barthes makes the point that an actor pretends to engage in action but that his actions are never anything but empty gestures. This is descriptive of how teachers view the performance they give for their evaluators. They speak of portraying a teacher, or at least, of acting the part that they think the observer expects them to act. Teachers describe their actions as a charade, a game called "teaching", and, almost without exception, they claim that in all this they are not themselves.

Laing remarks that only actions which are genuine, revealing and potentiating are felt by me to be fulfilling and that I can be fulfilled only in so far as my act is me, that I put myself into what I do, that I become myself through this doing. When I do not put myself into my actions, I will feel empty and haunted by futility. And, if I have a false picture of my self, I must falsify your picture of yourself.

In this way when teachers come to understand themselves as a role called *teacher* then the students cannot be anything but a role called *student*. If the actions of teachers, which are valued, are only those which are predetermined as being good teacher actions, they are compelled to value only those actions of students which have been predetermined to be good students actions. When the teachers behaviour is restricted by certain boundaries, they must confine the behaviour of the students. Any behaviour that exceeds the boundaries is seen as being behaviour *out of control*.

When teachers' creativity, inventiveness, spontaneity, uncertainty and mystery are not valued, they will find it difficult to value or nurture those characteristics in students. As inauthentic as the teachers must be so must the students for the teachers world cannot be other than what they are.

functionaries as inauthentic beings

Heidegger says "things" can be seen in terms of usefulness, of something made and as bearers of traits. A thing is that around which certain properties are assembled. In the sense that teaching is understood as a set of characteristics which, when directed in a particular way, will make something of students, teaching becomes a *thing* and teachers become mere functionaries--just machines.

The language of teacher evaluation is the language of the functional, that is, a language which defines the activities or actions proper to any thing. To be seen as functioning properly, teachers must dress professionally, follow courses of study, administer discipline fairly and consistenly or plan lessons appropriately. The criteria for teacher evaluation often reads like a car operating manual.

In this way, evaluation encourages an inauthentic being. It encourages teachers to *do* and not *be* and in doing so attempts to deny them of their humanness, of their ability to respond authentically to that which called them to be teachers in the first place. It denies them the opportunity of offering their creative and inventive selves for the last thing that is wanted from a machine is creativity and inventiveness.

As Heidegger tells us, man is capable of living like a thing, but since he is not a thing, to live like one makes him a prisoner of his functions---exiled from himself. When we view teachers as mere functionaries, as roles, we discourage them from offering *themselves,* a fundamental requisite of deep human caring which must be the heart of teaching.

the deception of technique

The understanding that teachers are mere functionaries is revealed in the preoccupation that teacher evaluation has with the techniques of teaching. But good teachers seem to know intutitively that it is not what is in their plan books, nor on their

walls that constitutes teaching. They understand that anyone at all can *have* all the teacher skills yet not *be* a teacher. They understand that real teaching occurs at a point beyond technique.

They know implicitly that the art student can be given certain mechanistic rules to get started and that there is a point at which the artist must go beyond certainty, a point at which she must respond to her gift, her talent, to the call from within. The artist who hears only praise for "staying in the lines" will continue to create art which hangs lifeless in shopping mall aisles.

What is it that happens when we focus our attention on technique? Polanyi tells us that when we look *at* a thing, we exteriorize it or alienate it. That is to say, if I am walking down a railroad track and I concentrate my attention on where or how I put my foot down on the track I will surely lose my balance. The way I am able to keep my balance is to *see past* my movements, to lose myself in my walking. Similarily, if , when I look at a bouquet of flowers I concentrate on the color, the shape, or the particular kind of flowers, I still cannot say that I have seen the bouquet. To see the bouquet I must look not *at* the particulars but *through* them to that which they point.

The same can be said of teaching. When teachers concentrate their efforts on the techniques of teaching, on making eye contact, on varying questions, on not talking to the blackboard, on finishing to the bell, it cannot yet be said that they are teaching. When a lesson is done and teachers say that "that was a good lesson", they are not aware of having sequenced a particular set of skills. In their words, "I just teach; it all flows together. What made it work, I'm not sure." To ask a teacher which technique or set of techniques ought to be used in good teaching is as like asking whether it is the valleys or the pile of rocks which makes the mountain.

Polanyi also reminds us that parts are meaningful only so long as we attend *through* them to that which they point. When we make the particular techniques our focus we can no longer see their relationship, we have lost their meaning. Meaning comes only through relationship.

For example, when we focus on the foot on the balance beam we cannot see the artistry. It is not the foot on the beam, nor even the unwavering body that allows the audience to catch their breath. Breath is caught on the wholeness of the moment. When

the audience sees through the arched body, past the movement, through the technique to the intention or the spirit of the gymnast then they can applaud. When the audience can put themselves into that intention or spirit then they have not watched a performance; then they have had an experience.

As long as our attention is riveted on technique, as it seems to be in teacher evaluation, then there is danger that all we will ever get is a performance. We are in danger of creating experientially empty beings.

When teachers say that what they get from evaluations are empty comments, it is to this experiential emptiness that their talk points. Saying that Mark has good rapport with his students, is to miss the essence of the deep caring he has for his students. To say that Jessie has good control of her classroom is empty of the human connectedness which she shares with her students. When the supervisors comments are concerned primarily with the techniques of teaching they will always be empty of the true experience since experience is never constitued in technique alone.

we as authentic being

An evaluator writes:

> My job was to rate 'performance' on a scale of one to five, in forty-six little boxes indicating the majors 'skills' of the teacher and to add supporting written commentary on the evaluation form. Somehow the forty-six little boxes seemed irrelevant. Maybe forty-seven and forty-eight and forty-nine should have read "enthusiam for learning", "love of adolescents", "respect for human dignity". Thank you for bringing back to my attention what teaching really means.
>
> In Praise of Miracles

What the evaluator is expressing is that *to teach* is not just a matter of having a bag of tricks but rather *to teach* is to engage in an activity that is fundamentally a human activity which demands a relationship. To talk of teaching is to talk of a sense of *we*, to talk of what we, teachers and students, together can do.

Sartre writes that in the *we* nobody is the object, that *we* includes a plurality of subjectivities which recognize one another as subjectivities. We, teacher and student, struggle together to understand the relationship between acceleration and mass. Teachers speak of **my** homeroom, of **we** being the intramural winners. **My** class and **my** students are common phrases in teachers' talk. When a student's behaviour is

inappropriate teachers often say, "I have a problem." Teachers understand the importance of *we* relationships in teaching.

Sartre tells us that the *we* is a certain particular experience which is produced in special cases on the foundation of being-for-others in general. The being-for-others precedes and founds the being-with-others. My principal describes the good teachers in his school as those who are *there for the students* and this notion is reiterated by teachers who feel it is important to be *there for my students.*

When teachers say that they are *there for students* they do not mean that they are present for some concept called *student*. To say that I am *there for students* is to say I am open to participate fully, without prior structure or condition, to our being together. To be *there for a student* teachers must escape from their roles; they must be able to respond to the child, not like one who asks the proper questions in the proper order or who rewards and praises and shows empathy appropriately, nor does it mean to be available "beyond the call of duty" to help students. To be *there for a student* is not descriptive of some rapport between teacher and student, but rather it is descriptive of a communion between Mark and Micheal or Suzanne or Chad. It is a meeting outside the confining roles of teacher or student; it is two beings, Jessie and Trevor, authentically consistent with who they are as beings.

To be truly *we* claims Marcel, I cannot define ahead of time my participation, nor the participation of others for *thou* is present only to those who give of themselves. In a *we* relationship, Marcel says, no third person can stand outside it, to judge or verify it or to describe either of the partners or their experience of the relationship, that *thou* cannot be some objective truth for some uninvolved person standing outside the relationship.

When the evaluator is in the room the teachers cannot be available to the students since they are already required to be available to the evaluator. Tragically, they are available to the evaluator only objectively, that is, as some *thing* to be analyzed and dismantled so as to expose their functioning. This obtrusive presence of the evaluator stands in the way of the possibility of connectedness between teachers and students so what the evaluator sees is never teaching, but a facsimile, a performance.

the plea for understanding authentic being

When we stand back and observe teaching objectively, we will see only fragments, techniques, functions and empty gestures. With such a stance it is not possible to *see* the teachers' meanings and intentions which are the fibres which weave the parts together, which create the relationships and hence, the meaning. When teachers plea for understanding they are expressing a hope that educational administrators will *see* their hopes and intentions for the children in their classrooms. They are pleading to be understood as more than a mere function, a mechanism whose planning, organizing, managing, or reinforcing keys need to be serviced periodically.

They know that the world of teacher and student is not naturally a world of objectives, lesson plans, posters on the wall, control nor even rapport. They know that "to teach" is to be in a world of eyes lit with wonder, a world of passion, laughter and disillusionment, a world of faces empty of life, because they have known only "things". It is a world where both success and failure can be equally valuable. It is a world where beings reach out to make authentic, spontaneous, real contact. It is a world of children, rich with human uncertainty. The plea for understanding is a plea for all those who have an interest in educating our children, to understand what it is really like to be *with* and *for* children, in schools.

B. Evaluation as a Way of Taking Value 'from'

Evaluators claim to be finding what is of value or merit or worth in teaching, but Heidegger reminds us that it is precisely when we characterize something as "a value" we rob it of its worth; that by assessing something as valuable, what is valued becomes an object for man's estimation. "Valuing does not let beings be: rather valuing lets beings be valid-solely as the objects of its doing."

Heidegger's notion of valuing as a way of robbing something of its worth, is especially revealing when we consider the etymology of the word *evaluate*. The prefix *e* is a variation of the prefix *ex* which means without, not including, out of, from "utterly and thoroughly" and imparting a negative force. *Value* means worth, merit, usefulness, excellence. The suffix *ate* forms nouns indicating conditions. Translated, from its origins *to evaluate* literally means to take the worth, merit, usefulness, and excellence utterly and

thoroughly out of or from something. Whatever it is that is *evaluated* is without or does not include that which was of value in the first place. The historicity of the word *evaluate* affirms the notion of valuing as a way of robbing something of its worth. For teachers, evaluation has a way of robbing them of an authentic being.

VI. Chapter Six

A. Conclusion

When asked to describe a time when they were evaluated, teachers do not speak of the time when they went to the prinicipal to talk about Cara or Kevin or curriculum or discipline; nor do they tell of the time the principal came into their classroom to deliver a message and remarked on the classroom displays or the behaviour of the students. They do not speak of the times that they asked colleagues about how they might better address a certain topic or develop a more supportive relationship with a pupil. When teachers tell of a time when they were evaluated they most often recall a time when someone came on a scheduled visit to watch them teach and to write an assessment of what was seen. "To be evaluated" implies a formalization of interaction between teacher and evaluator.

The talk of evaluation theorists, policy makers and practitioners is a language of production, performance, technique, function, goals and pre-determined criteria. It is a language which attempts to objectify and rationalize all aspects of education. It is a language which sees value only in the determinate aspects of teaching and learning. It is a language we have used so often that we have forgotten that it is not inherently descriptive of what it means to teach; we have forgotten that it is a language that we created in the first place. And, it is a language completely devoid of a deep loving and caring for children. As van Manen says:

> The language we, as teacher educators, make available through our research and theorizing in the main is technical, abstract, alienated from the world it must represent. It is a deontologized language. It lacks being.(1983:88)

Heidegger tells us that it is often in letting beings be that they are disclosed to us.

> To let beings be does not refer to neglect and indifference but rather the opposite. To let be is to engage oneself with beings. To be sure, this is not to be understood only as the mere management, preservation, tending and planning of the beings in each case encountered or sought out. To let be--that is, to let beings be as the beings which they are-means to engage oneself with the open region and its openness into which every being comes to stand, bringing that openness, as it were, along with itself.(1967:127)

To evaluate does not let beings be in the Heideggerian sense. Teacher evaluation insists that only that which is observable has value in teaching. The criteria in teacher evaluation policies are definitive, concrete, visible. Some criteria even presume to make visible that which remains essentially invisible even in observation. Teacher evaluation

implies that we can speak definitively about good pedagogy. Yet the research suggests that we can no more speak conclusively of good pedagogy than we can of good mothering since the essence of good pedagogy, like good mothering cannot be captured in scienticized language.

We can watch a mother take into her arms her sobbing son. We can describe her movements and her actions and we have not yet described "mothering" because not all taking into arms is mothering. Still we are comfortable in saying when we see a particular incident of a mother holding her son, "That is mothering." Yet, when we try to analyze that incident, to break it down, to have what Heidegger would call technical mastery over it, we lose the very essence of mothering in the incident. To capture, for observation, dissection or for knowing in a technical sense, good mothering or good pedagogy, is like capturing a butterfly, for in capturing it we cannot help but hurt it and we can no longer have an experience of its essence.

Formalized teacher evaluation, does not encourage an open engagement with beings. It does not encourage teacher and evaluator to remain open to all the possibilities of being a teacher. It recognizes good teaching to be almost exclusively a mode of having rather than being. It does not understand as Denton understands that, "Teaching is a mode of being in the world and as such, is neither describable nor analyzable with the language of things" (1974:103).

When teachers speak of their evaluation as being an empty comment they are speaking of their understanding that teaching cannot be separated from the teacher and the learner and doing and having cannot be cornered off from being. To be a teacher is not merely a matter of having a particular theory or technique; nor is it simply a matter of executing a preconceived performance. Teaching is more than its describable components. Teaching is the experience of being with and for others and as such can never be entirely captured in any kind of technical language.

As long as the language of teacher evaluation remains a language of production, performance, technique, function, goals and predetermined criteria, and as long as the language of teacher evaluation continues to be devoid of being, the comments that are made in an effort to improve the quality of teaching will remain empty comments.

B. Implications

Heidegger warns us that:

> Dasein grows into a customary interpretation of itself and grows up in that interpretation. It understands itself in terms of this interpretation at first, and within a certain range, constantly. This understanding discloses the possibility of its Being and regulates them.(1962:64)

When teachers reflect on their experiences of being formally evaluated, their talk points to a lack of being which current evaluation practices encourage. Their talk points to the danger of teachers interpreting themselves as simply performers or mere technicians. Their talk points to the fear they have of the possibility that the understanding of what it means to teach will be determined and regulated by such an interpretation. The talk points to their concern that the undisclosed parts of teaching may be lost or that educators will, at best, give only minimal importance to any aspect of teaching which cannot or is not articulated as a valued technique.

If the possibilities of teaching are both determined and regulated by current formalized evaluation practices, it might well be that we will lose that which we are trying to save, especially if quality of education, includes the way we are being with and for the children whom we teach.

Thus, we might well ask, as Tolstoy asked, "What then, must we do?"

We must encourage research methodologies which *look* at the concrete experience of teaching as a way of coming to insights into what "to teach" really means.

We must encourage the development and use of new metaphors as way of understanding teaching.

We must find a way to integrate educational philosophy and ontological philosophy with research and practice in education.

At very least, we must do, as Hannah Arendt admonishes us, "To think what we are doing," for:

> what we have to do with, really, is a decisive option, the choice between being and not being. Today, however, we must recognize that it is possible for non-being to be preferred, possible also for it to wear the mask of being.
>
> Gabriel Marcel

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